

TRIBUTE TO JOHN A. WILLIAMS
SR. OF PADUCAH

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I pay tribute today to John A. Williams, Sr. of Paducah, KY for his diligence and commitment to the community in which he lives. Mr. Williams was honored for his civic work at the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on Thursday, January 29, 2004.

In 1965, John A. Williams founded Computer Services, Inc., CSI, under the initiative to provide the finest bank date processing services in Western Kentucky and Illinois. CSI, which began with six employees and three customers, was an agreement of three Paducah banks to consolidate for the initiative. Mr. Williams continues as chairman of the board for CSI, which is now ranked as the fourth largest bank data processing company in the nation and continues to bring new technology and jobs to the region it serves.

Additionally, Mr. Williams has served on the board of every major business, civic, and cultural organization in Paducah. He is currently on the board of Paducah Power Systems, and has served on a number of Governors' Commissions for the Commonwealth.

The Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce named Mr. Williams Distinguished Citizen for his work in securing money for the Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Center, leading a campaign that raised more the \$9 million for the performing arts center. The citizens of Paducah are proud of the beautiful, downtown Four Rivers Center and appreciate Mr. Williams and the other citizens that put so much time and energy into securing the funds for the center. The center opens at the end of February and will provide the entire region with a wide variety of entertainment, cultural, and educational programs.

Mr. Williams is a tribute to Paducah and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky. I thank the Senate for allowing me to recognize him and the contributions he has made.●

BILL WORKMAN

• Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina. Mr. President, thank you for this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of one of my constituents Bill Workman.

I rise to commend him for his previous work as Mayor of Greenville, SC from 1983 to 1995, his many years of tireless community activities, and his most recent position as vice president of South Carolina District Operations of Piedmont Natural Gas Company. He is scheduled to retire from this position in February 2004.

Mr. Workman also serves as president of the Greenville County Research and Technological Development Corporation and as charter chairman of the Greenville Area Development Corporation.

Over the past few decades, Greenville and upstate South Carolina have slow-

ly been transformed from being a textile capital of the world to a much more diversified economy. Since 1985, engineering, telecommunications, retail and knowledge-based companies have joined manufacturing as major sources of new jobs. There is no doubt Greenville is now one of the Southeast regions' premier cities for business.

Bill Workman played a leading role in this evolution and has made many noteworthy contributions to Greenville and upstate South Carolina.

He served as a past president of the Municipal Association of South Carolina and is a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, a graduate of Leadership South Carolina, and is listed in Who's Who in America. He was named the 1999 Nelson Mullins Business Person of the Year in Greenville and Volunteer of the Year for 2000-2001 by the South Carolina Economic Developers Association.

Mr. Workman is a graduate of The Citadel and served 2 years active duty. He has worked as a newspaper reporter for the Charleston News and Courier and the Greenville News. He later taught and served as dean of Allied Health Sciences at Greenville Technical College. He served 6 years on the school board of Greenville County and was a founder of the S.C. Literacy Association.

He served as executive assistant for natural resources and economic development for Gov. James B. Edwards. Mr. Workman's selfless efforts also include community economic analyses and siting studies involving hundreds of counties in North America.

He has two sons, three stepdaughters, and three grandchildren and is married to the former Patti Gage Fishburne of Walterboro.

We all appreciate his years of service to his community and wish him the very best in all his future endeavors. Mr. Workman may retire in February from his position with Piedmont Natural Gas, but as his past history has shown, he will never retire from his commitment to making Greenville a great place to live.●

NTCA 50th ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. I take great pride in the fact that BEK Communications Cooperative of Steele, ND is among the founding members of NTCA. Forming soon after the Rural Electrification Administration, REA—today known as the Rural Utilities Service—was granted authority to make loans to telephone companies, BEK and its fellow members in the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, NTCA, have evolved from providing basic multiparty telephone service to offering a full array of advanced telecommunications services.

Rural telecommunications carriers owe a debt of gratitude to REA, and

those who sought to expand its role. The idea of expanding the scope and authority of the REA, began in the late 1930s when REA Administrator John Carmody wrote:

Personally, I have long felt there was a real opportunity for constructive assistance to rural people in the idea of Federal financing of farm telephone lines. It seems to me that the rural people have just as much right to up-to-date communication as they have to modern power. There's no question in my mind but that Government assistance will be required if the job is ever to be completed.

This idea remained just an idea until 1944 when Senator Lister Hill, a Democrat from Alabama, introduced legislation calling for the formation of the Rural Telephone Administration, modeled after the REA. Senator Hill was soon joined in his effort to bring telephone service to rural America by Representative W.R. "Bob" Poage, Democrat from Texas, who introduced similar legislation calling for the expansion of the existing REA to make telephone loans.

Following 4 years of failed attempts, Congress finally succeeded in passing the telephone amendments to the Rural Electrification Act. On October 28, 1949, President Harry Truman signed the measure into law, which granted the REA the authority to make loans for the extension and improvement of rural telephone service.

Soon thereafter, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, NRECA, created a telephone committee, composed of representatives of newly formed joint electric-telephone cooperative organizations. By 1954, representatives from these co-ops, with the encouragement of NRECA, decided that the time had come to form a separate national organization to represent telephone cooperatives.

On June 1, 1954, eight companies, including my constituent then known as BEK Mutual Aid Corporation, along with: Buggs Island Telephone Cooperative, Chase City, VA; Mark Twain Rural Telephone Company, Bethel, MO; Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Circle, MT; Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Metter, GA; Winnebago Cooperative Telephone Association, Lake Mills, IA, Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative Gainesboro, TN, and North Central Telephone Cooperative Lafayette, TN formed the National Telephone Cooperative Association, which was later renamed the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association.

BEK, whose name was formed by the initials of Burleigh, Emmons, and Kidder counties, was incorporated in 1952, and was one of the first recipients of telephone loans from the REA. In fact, the company received its first REA loan for \$371,000 in April 1952 to purchase and upgrade its Hazleton, ND exchange. In 1954, REA approved a second loan for \$1,499,000. This funding enabled BEK to expand their service territory with the purchase of several independent telephone companies and to